(d) whether it is a fact that Government are unable to meet the demand for trained crew in India; and

(e) the steps proposed to assist the Indian fishery sector?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI TASLIMUDDIN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) CIFNET with Headquarter at Kochi has two field units: (i) Chennai and (ii) Visakhapatnam. There is no proposal to set up training institutes at Paradeep and other places.

(c) The foreign national employed on board on the deep sea fishing vessel are given clearance by the Ministry after obtaining the clearance from Ministry of Home Affairs from security angle under intimation to the Coast Guard.

(d) The persons trained under Mate Fishing Vessel Course and Engine Driver Fishing Vessel Course organized by CIFNET is sufficient to man the fishing vessels in the country.

(e) The Central Government extends financial assistance to the States to implement schemes for development of fisheries sector. Two macro schemes entitled "Development of Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture" and "Development of Marine Fisheries, Infrastructure and Post Harvest Operations" encompassing various components are in place.

Decrease in area under cultivation

1816. SHRI T.T.V. DHINAKARAN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact the area under cultivation has decreased over the years in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof, stating the major crops the cultivation areas of which have decreased; and

(c) the reasons for this decrease and the steps taken to bring more areas under cultivation?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) to (c) No, Sir. The area under major foodgrains and other commercial crops

varied between 158 to 161 million hectares during the period 1999-2000 to 2004-05. However, in 2002-03 this area decreased to about 149 million hectares because of severe drought which affected several States in the country. In the subsequent years, because of better rainfall in monsoon season the area under foodgrains and commercial crops again increased to 160-161 million hectares. The details are given in the table below:

Crops					Area (Million Hectares)	
	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
Foodgrain	123.1	121.0	122.8	113.9	123.3	120.2
Oilseeds	24.3	22.8	22.6	21.5	23.7	27.0
Cotton	8.7	8.5	9.1	7.7	7.6	8.9
Sugarcane	4.2	4.3	4.4	4.5	4.0	3.6
Jute& Mesta	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	0.9
TOTAL:	161.4	157.7	160.0	148.6	159.7	160.6

For increasing area under cultivation more areas are being brought under irrigation. As per the latest information only around 40% of land under cultivation has been brought under irrigation. The other thrust areas include promotion of water and soil conservation through watershed approach, implementation of 'On Farm Water Management for increasing crop production in Eastern India' by exploiting abundant ground and surface water resources and implementation of National Horticulture Mission for promotion of sowing of horticulture crops.

New variety of wheat by ICAR

1817. SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that the scientists of Indian Institute of Agricultural Research have developed a new variety (Pusa Gold) of wheat;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is a fact that the seeds of new variety of wheat are ready